

The U.S. Embassy is pleased to announce that Nepal has been selected as one of 20 focus countries for President Obama's \$3.5 Billion Feed the Future initiative. Feed the Future is a comprehensive country-owned and agriculture-led approach that aims to significantly and sustainably reduce hunger and poverty in the developing world. The U.S. Government has named food security as a major global priority. USAID Mission Director, Dr. Kevin Rushing, met with the Mr. Nathu Prasad Chaudhary, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Dr. Chandra Pokharel, the Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission to inform them of the good news.

Mission Director, Dr. Rushing stated; "The United States is working closely with the Government of Nepal and the other donors to be sure we can meet President Obama's objectives to reduce chronic hunger and poverty in Nepal."

Although more than 80% of Nepal's population works in the agriculture sector, production of staple crops like wheat and barley has steadily declined. Sixty-six percent of Nepali households report food shortages and nearly half of children under five are undernourished.

"One billion people worldwide are hungry," noted USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah when announcing the selections in Washington, D.C. "Each year, inadequate nutrition contributes to 3.5 million deaths among children under five. Undernutrition robs the developing world of critical human capital and capacity, and undermines other development investments in health, education, and economic growth. It also perpetuates the cycle of poverty and hunger by leading to poor health, lower levels of educational attainment, and reduced productivity and lifetime earnings."

Nepal demonstrates potential for rapid and sustainable agriculture-led growth, as well as opportunities for regional coordination through trade and other mechanisms. Feed the Future will tackle the root causes of global hunger by sustainably increasing agricultural productivity to meet the demand for food, supporting and facilitating access to strong markets, providing employment opportunities, and increasing incomes so the poor can purchase food and reduce undernutrition through development and diplomatic efforts. Partners in Nepal will include a variety of actors from national and local government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

The 20 Feed the Future focus countries are: Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Tajikistan in Asia; Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia in Africa; and Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua in Latin America.